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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-third session

Draft report

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Addendum

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015
(*Item 3 (a)*)

Report of the Secretary-General on consolidated changes to the biennial programme plan as reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Programme 11
Environment

1. At its 11th meeting, on 12 June 2013, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on consolidated changes to the biennial programme plan as reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (A/68/75).

2. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Support and appreciation were expressed for programme 11, Environment. Some delegations noted that the programme is one of the most challenging and of the highest priority. Delegations noted that the work of UNEP in the next biennium must be carried out in the light of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The same delegations expressed the need for a more balanced approach in terms of the three pillars of sustainable development contained in the programme.

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4. The Committee stresses the importance of programme 11 and its implementation in the context of the mandates of UNEP, taking into consideration the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

5. The efforts of UNEP to ensure system-wide coherence, the strengthening of regional offices, the support for cooperation, capacity-building and technology transfer initiatives aimed at assisting developing countries were welcomed by some delegations.

6. Some delegations indicated that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was chiefly about sustainable development, as well as the environment, and that it represented a launching pad for a new development model that incorporates social development and environmental protection issues. Poverty eradication as an essential priority of development was referred to as one of the major legacies of the Conference, and the need for having poverty eradication as an overarching theme within the programme was stressed.

7. The view was expressed that integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, social, environmental and economic, in decision-making was of paramount importance, as well as ensuring that social and environmental objectives guide economic approaches.

8. Some delegations expressed concern about the use of the term "green economy", which was used throughout the biennial programme plan for UNEP. Views were expressed that the term "green economy" had been used in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Accordingly, many delegations queried why "green economy" was not used in that context in the biennial programme plan.

9. Some delegations underscored the connection between the concepts of "green economy" and sustainable development, in that the first should be an instrument for mobilizing countries towards sustainable development, based on the understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The same delegations affirmed the importance of ensuring that the green economy concept is not interpreted as favouring aspects of commercialization of advanced technology solutions over the pursuit of solutions adapted to the distinct realities of developing countries.

10. Regarding the strengthening of UNEP, it was highlighted that perfecting international environmental governance does not mean prejudging or excluding the need to strengthen the other pillars of sustainable development. On the contrary, it must ensure a coherent treatment of the three pillars.

11. Concern was expressed concerning the chart provided by UNEP during the deliberations in the Committee, which reflected system-wide partnerships for the environment, in particular the coordination and partnerships of UNEP with other United Nations agencies on substantive themes such as "green economy" or "green jobs". Some delegations expressed the view that United Nations agencies should focus on their own mandated activities and not carry out environment-related activities that are under the purview of UNEP.

12. Concern was expressed regarding the continued use by the Secretariat of terms and concepts such as "product life cycle", "ecosystem management", "ecosystem-based adaptation", "societies in transition", "transition to a green economy",

"environmental sustainability" and others, regarding which consensus is lacking among Member States. In addition, it was underlined that references to "green economy" must incorporate the complete formulation of the concept, according to section III of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", entitled, "Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication".

13. Furthermore, the characterization of "green economy" as a "main pillar underpinning this programme of work" was identified as being misleading, considering it has not been agreed upon at the intergovernmental level, and it was felt that this might give rise to confusion regarding the already established three pillars of sustainable development. Clarification was sought regarding the use of the terms "green investments", "green economy policies", "decent green employment" and green postal services. It was pointed out that the term "transition to a green economy" is not coherent with the outcome document of the Conference as it seems to refer to a predetermined form of transition to green economy, while countries need to pursue options that best suit their needs and national circumstances.

14. Views were expressed that few changes had been made to the biennial programme plan for UNEP that had been considered by the Committee in 2012, after the holding of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Specifically, some delegations indicated that the Committee had received the proposed strategic framework for UNEP for the period 2014-2015 during the fifty-second session, in June 2012, but had decided to delay its consideration until after impact of the Rio Conference was known. However, many delegations expressed the view that some of the proposals now before the Committee did not fully reflect the outcome of the Conference.

15. Under subprogramme 1, a few delegations sought clarification of the phrase "facilitating access to finance".

16. Delegations expressed views on the role of technology and technology transfer on the environment in the context of sustainable development. Also under subprogramme 1, it was noted that indicator of achievement (b) (i) referred to a number of countries implementing new renewable energy and/or energy efficiency initiatives. Delegations questioned whether it might not be possible to also establish an indicator of achievement with regard to the transfer of technologies.

17. Some delegations also expressed concern about the role and mandate of UNEP in disasters and conflicts and the activities it had undertaken with respect to subprogramme 2. It was noted that UNEP should work within its mandate, that is, the environmental dimension of conflict, disaster response and risk reduction, in order to avoid a multiplicity of forums, overlapping with the mandates of other organizations and duplication of efforts in the treatment of the theme. Concern was expressed regarding the establishment of a linkage between the work of UNEP and the broader fields of international peace and security, in order to avoid the "securitization" of the theme. A delegation queried the change in the name of subprogramme 2 to Disasters and conflicts. Clarification was also sought on paragraph 37 of the report on consolidated changes, specifically the reference to UNEP's leadership role "beyond environmental matters".

18. One delegation expressed serious concern about the proposed changes to subprogramme 2, Disasters and conflicts, noting that the changes represent a

departure from the previous narrative and stressing that the proposed narrative comprises elements and concepts without intergovernmental mandates. In addition, some of the proposals ignore previous decisions of the General Assembly. The inclusion of elements with a clear political impact that go far beyond the mandate of UNEP was also highlighted as a matter of serious concern by the same delegation, which considered that the subprogramme needed to be reformulated by the Assembly during its sixty-eighth regular session and expressed its intention to propose some amendments to the narrative.

19. Under subprogramme 4, Environmental governance, it was noted by some delegations that there were insufficient references to the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development as only principle 10 was mentioned. It was further highlighted that Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation should provide baselines for many planned activities under the subprogramme.

20. In subprogramme 5, Chemicals and waste, it was noted by some delegations that the subprogramme should not prejudge how the environmentally sound management of chemicals could be included in national plans. It was asserted that the environmentally sound management of chemicals, which can be included into national development plans, should not prescribe how public-private partnerships would eventually be implemented. The need for further discussion of the means of implementation was also underlined.

21. Regarding subprogramme 6, Resource efficiency, some delegations stressed the need to encompass the totality of the themes of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, not only the resource efficiency aspect.

22. In view of the expanded programme of work of UNEP, including the proposed establishment of a new subprogramme 7, Environment under review, and the newly mandated activities resulting from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, several delegations raised queries on monitoring and evaluation. Delegations expressed the view that UNEP should take monitoring and evaluation a step further by focusing on outcomes to determine whether its programmes lead to improvement in the lives of people.

Conclusions and recommendations

23. **The Committee stressed the importance of programme 11 and its implementation in the context of the mandates of UNEP and the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.**

24. **The Committee noted with concern the continued use by the Secretariat of terms and concepts for which consensus is still lacking among Member States. In that regard, the Committee stressed the need to be consistent with the agreed language, especially in the formulation of the proposed programme plan, when dealing with contentious issues.**

25. **The Committee stressed that the green economy, in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, is a new concept that was agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and that it should therefore be implemented, taking the outcome of the Conference into consideration.**

26. **The Committee welcomed the use of partnerships in the work of UNEP and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that oversight of such partnerships is further increased by UNEP in order to provide greater transparency and accountability to Member States.**

27. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the changes to the narrative of programme 11, Environment, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/75) and the relevant section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)), subject to the following modifications:**

Overall orientation

Paragraph 14.2 (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)), paragraph 37 (A/68/75)

Delete the words "with societies in transition".

Paragraph 14.5 (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)), paragraph 40 (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, after the word "technology" add the words ", including through the facilitation of technology development and sharing,".

Paragraph 40 (A/68/75)

In the second sentence, replace the word "safeguards" with the word "considerations,".

Add a new paragraph 14.6 (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)) and paragraph 41 (A/68/75) (renumbering all subsequent paragraphs), to read as follows:

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development recognized poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge facing the world today and as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Sustainable development and poverty eradication, and green economy policies in that context, are matters of concern for all countries and cannot be dissociated from the commitment of all Member States to freeing humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency, as stated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Paragraph 14.7 (formerly para. 14.6) (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)), paragraph 42 (formerly para. 41) (A/68/75)

Delete the first sentence of the paragraph and replace it with the following:

A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication is one of the important tools for achieving sustainable development; the support that UNEP provides to countries in this regard will constitute an important part of its programme of work.

In the second sentence, delete the phrase "in regard to related opportunities for decent green employment", and revise the sentence to read:

UNEP will, in particular, strengthen its cooperation with the International Labour Organization, in conformity with paragraph 62 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development "The future we want".

Paragraph 14.10 (formerly para. 14.9) (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)), paragraph 45 (formerly para. 44) (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, insert the words "inclusive and transparent intergovernmental" before the phrase "process of developing the sustainable development goals".

Paragraph 14.12 (formerly para. 14.11) (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)), paragraph 47 (formerly para. 46) (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, delete the words "and peacebuilding" and insert the word "and" between the words "response" and "recovery".

Paragraph 14.16 (formerly para. 14.15) (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)), paragraph 51 (formerly para. 50) (A/68/75)

In the last sentence, replace the term "green economy strategies" with the word "strategies".

Paragraph 53 (formerly para. 52) (A/68/75)

In the sixth sentence, delete the words ", through efficiency and decoupling,".

Subprogramme 1
Climate change

Objective of the Organization (A/68/75)

Replace the word "pathways" with the word "strategies".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat (A/68/6 (Sect. 14), table 14.15) and (A/68/75, table for subprogramme 1)

In expected accomplishment (a), replace the words "ecosystem-based and supporting adaptation approaches" with the words "Adaptation approaches, including an ecosystem-based approach,".

In expected accomplishment (b)

Replace the word "pathways" with the word "strategies".

Indicators of achievement (A/68/6 (Sect. 14), table 14.15) and (A/68/75, table for subprogramme 1)

In indicator of achievement (b), add indicator (b) (iii), to read:

"Increased number of implemented programmes/projects by countries on transfer of advanced technologies in the area of renewable energy/or energy efficiency with the assistance of UNEP".

Strategy

Paragraph 54 (formerly para. 53) (A/68/75)

Delete the second sentence and replace it with the following:

"The subprogramme is aimed at helping countries to build readiness and facilitate access to financing, through, inter alia, the creation of enabling environments, in order to address climate change in the context of sustainable development by:"

In paragraph 54 (d) (formerly para. 53 (a)) (A/68/75)

After the phrase "policies, plans and climate actions in countries" insert the words ", upon their request".

Paragraph 55 (formerly para. 54) (A/68/75)

In the second sentence, delete the words "discussions held and".

In the third sentence, after the words "sound science" insert the words ", in particular by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change".

In the last sentence, replace the word "pathways" with the word "strategies".

Paragraph 55 (a) (formerly para. 54 (a)) (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, after the words "UNEP will support countries" insert the words ", in particular developing countries,".

After the word "primarily" insert towards "efforts to incorporate adaptation approaches, including".

In the second sentence, after the words "To achieve this, UNEP will conduct" insert the words ", upon request,".

Paragraph 55 (b) (formerly para. 54 (b)) (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, replace the term "a green economy" with the words "the implementation of green economy strategies".

Insert a new third sentence, to read:

"UNEP will also contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation by facilitating support of Governments, relevant entities and other entities for the Climate Technology Centre and Network, to be hosted by UNEP."

Paragraph 55 (c) (formerly para. 54 (c)) (A/68/75)

In the fourth sentence, replace the term "the green economy" with the following "green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and sustainable patterns of consumption and production".

In the fifth sentence, replace the word "pathways" with the word "strategies".

In the last sentence, replace the word "safeguards" with the word "objectives".

Subprogramme 2
Disasters and conflicts

Indicators of achievement (A/68/6 (Sect. 14) and (A/68/75)

In indicator of achievement (a) (ii), replace "fragile States and vulnerable regions," with "countries emerging from conflict or recovering from natural disasters,".

Strategy

Paragraph 58 (formerly para. 57) (A/68/75)

Delete, the first sentence and replace it with the following:

"Moreover, an internal coordination platform will be established to improve and share knowledge on synergies among work on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, adaptation approaches to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches, and ecosystem-based approaches to disaster risk reduction".

Subprogramme 3
Ecosystem management

Objective of the Organization (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)) and (A/68/75)

Delete the words "provide" and "among countries".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat (A/68/6 (Sect. 14), table 1.4.19) and (A/68/75, table for subprogramme 3)

In expected accomplishment (c), delete the word "wider" and replace the word "seascapes" with the words "coastal zones".

Strategy

Paragraph 62 (a) (formerly para. 61 (a)) (A/68/75)

In the second sentence, after the phrase "feeding a growing global population in a sustainable manner" insert the phrase "while promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production,".

Paragraph 62 (b) (formerly para. 61 (b)) (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, replace the word "work" with the words "support countries in their efforts".

Subprogramme 4
Environmental governance

Strategy

Paragraph 65 (a) (formerly para. 64 (a)) (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, replace the words "Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum" with the words "United Nations

Environment Assembly of UNEP, formerly known as the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum".

Subprogramme 6
Resource efficiency (A/68/6 (Sect. 14) and (A/68/75)

Change the name of the subprogramme to "Resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production".

Objective of the Organization (A/68/6 (Sect. 14), table 14.25) and (A/68/75, table for subprogramme 6)

Replace the objective with the following: "To promote and assist efforts towards patterns in which goods and services are increasingly produced, processed and consumed in a sustainable way in order to reduce environmental impact and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the improvement of human well-being".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)) and (A/68/75)

In expected accomplishment (a), delete the words "and a green economy".

Indicators of achievement (A/68/6 (Sect. 14)) and (A/68/75)

Reword indicator of achievement (a) (i) to read: "Increased number of countries and cities that develop and integrate green economy policies, within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and sustainable consumption and production approaches and tools, as a result of UNEP assistance".

Paragraph 68 (a) (formerly para. 67) (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, after the word "UNEP" insert the words ", upon request,".

Replace the words "in developing policies that support a transition to a green economy" with the words "in developing green economy policies and practices".

Paragraph 70 (formerly para. 69) (A/68/75)

In the first sentence, after the words "poverty eradication" insert the words ", as well as joint efforts to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production".